

tion, how is the focal point to be determined? The radiogram in my judgment does not point it out (very rarely can a focus be noted on a plate) but only shows a diffused cloudiness and loss of outline as evidence of the disease, and not infrequently the process begins in the acetabulum; generally we are not able to distinguish between them, and to cut down on every child who presents symptoms of hip disease and hollow out the head and neck of the femur, interfere with the epiphysis and pave the way for a secondary infection into the midst of a tuberculous infiltration, when at all other times we look upon such a secondary infection as a catastrophe to be avoided at many hazards—and all this in a child in whom a focus cannot be located, and which may not be in the femur, and in a child who is winning against tubercle and isolating it, is to me rather serious and dangerous surgery.

EFFECT OF PROPRIETARY LITERATURE ON MEDICAL MEN.

By N. S. DAVIS, M. D., Chicago.

The printed matter issued by the manufacturers of proprietary and exclusive medicines is as various as are their products. The smaller part has a high scientific value; the larger part is more or less clever advertisement of wares for sale.

Naturally, as a monopoly of a good thing is sure to bring wealth to the manufacturer, almost every drug maker endeavors to place on the market one or many specialties of his own. To insure his exclusive right to manufacture them, it is usual for him to patent the process or trademark the name.

The clever manufacturers employ able men of science to test with care the physiologic and therapeutic actions of their drugs, and these reports, when given to us in full, are of genuine value. In subsequent advertising, however, the results obtained are summarized, and often so skilfully that disagreeable effects are lost sight of or minimized. Moreover, these summaries are imbedded in a mass of optimistic writing by the advertiser or by physicians who record their impressions; not observations made with the accuracy which science demands.

Therefore, even the best of this printed matter, of which we all receive so much, is not to be trusted. On the other hand, so many things of value first come to us in this way, that we cannot reject it all.

Often, unfortunately, rank nostrums, disguised as chemicals of definite composition, are described in print that is a perfect imitation of the best class of advertising matter which I have just described.

That we may not be duped, it is necessary to know by reputation the chemists who vouch for the character of the drugs, also the reputation of the pharmacologists and clinicians who test their action.

The remainder of nostrum literature consists of descriptions of the impressions of various physicians as to the therapeutic effects of mixtures, which any clever pharmacist could duplicate if given the op-

portunity. The nature of the remedy is hidden, as a rule, in the brief statement that it is an especially pure preparation of some well-known drug. Although many therapeutic virtues are claimed for it, it is often inert or so potent as to be dangerous, unless its nature is fully understood. Such mixtures never should be used. If all members of the medical profession would absolutely refuse to prescribe ready-made mixtures, either in liquid, pill or powder form, they would destroy one, if not the greatest, hindrance to successful and rational therapy.

In the first place, it is impossible properly to adapt the dose of drugs to individuals if one dose is given to all. Moreover, ready-made prescriptions lead to slovenly therapeutic reasoning and practice. For instance, a mixture of digitalis, strophanthus and nitroglycerin is often given when the effects of the latter are not wanted, though those of the former are, because the giver is accustomed to dispense the combination whenever a cardiac tonic is needed.

The prescription recently copied by THE JOURNAL of the American Medical Association¹ from the original column of another and advocated by its author as sovereign in pneumonia illustrates a common ignorance of the composition of widely advertised and used proprietaries, and an inclination to use them as though they were definite chemicals, not mixtures. The prescription to which I refer contains, first, a fair dose of acetanilid; second, sodium bicarbonate, and, third, bromo seltzer. The writer evidently did not know that the last also contained a fair dose of acetanilid, and that in his combination he was giving a large dose of this powerful drug. Many physicians use nostrum mixtures at first because the sample is at hand, and later because it is easily dispensed, and the practice becomes a habit.

We can not blame manufacturing chemists for finding new things or advertising them as cleverly as possible. That they and the nostrum vendor are surprisingly successful in selling their wares is largely our fault.

Proprietaries are used in enormous quantities. All medical men are, to a greater or less extent, employing them; and it is skillful advertising which has made this so.

Assuredly, it is legitimate practice to try a new drug or chemical which promises to be useful, for if we did not there would be no progress in therapeutics. Unfortunately, a prompt recapitulation of results is rarely made, and useless drugs are not discarded as they should be. However, sometimes this does happen, notably in the case of Bergeron's treatment of tuberculosis and later that of tuberculin and the x-ray. In a few months the whole medical world was apprised of the real value of these remedial agents.

We should see to it that all drugs are similarly weighed and labeled with their true value. Even our pharmacopeia contains inert and useless drugs retained because still prescribed, and for which, therefore, a standard must be established.

* Reprinted from the Journal A. M. A.

Medical men are too prone to accept new drugs as they accept new ideas, because they are new, without sufficiently testing them or demanding the approval of recognized authorities.

I make a conservative statement when I say that on the desks of each of us from three to ten advertisements such as I have described are placed daily, but the education of medical men in therapeutics by manufacturers does not stop here. Drummers are about as numerous as circulars, and each gives a brief, carefully prepared lecture on the wares which he carries. A lecture which is often interesting and if it told the whole truth would be instructive. Unfortunately, only that which will help to sell the goods is told. It is often surprising, too, how ignorant the detail man is when questioned as to his wares on other points than those in the lecture which he has committed to memory.

It is not surprising that medical men have surrendered to manufacturers and accept their teaching, since their goods are advertised in almost every medical journal and not infrequently well exploited in so-called original articles in these publications.

Manifestly, the condition in which we find ourselves must be changed. That this may be accomplished we must, first of all, recognize the disease, so to speak, of which we suffer. Second, we should insist that the teaching of pharmacology and therapeutics in medical schools be confined to the drugs of the pharmacopeia. Third, we should take more interest in the pharmacopeia and demand that it contain only drugs of genuine worth, and that it be revised often enough to insure the admission of all valuable new ones. Let the pharmacopeia be made a standard for both the medical and pharmaceutical professions.

Lastly, a greater amount of pharmacologic and therapeutic research should be stimulated. During the second and third quarters of the last century a very large amount of knowledge of this kind was accumulated by painstaking research; but in the last twenty-five or thirty years the attention of those medical men who have been contributing to our knowledge has been centered almost exclusively on etiology, bacteriology and pathology.

It is not surprising that in proportion as the most original minds among us neglect the field of pharmacology and therapeutics the manufacturer seizes this opportunity to instruct us. For he can do his teaching in his own way almost unchallenged by authorities.

MISSISSIPPI VALLEY MEDICAL ASSOCIATION.

The next meeting of the Mississippi Valley Medical Association will be held at Hot Springs, Arkansas, November 6, 7, and 8, under the presidency of Dr. J. H. Carstens, of Detroit, Mich. The annual addresses will be delivered by Dr. Frank Parsons Norbury, Jacksonville, Ill., in Medicine and by Dr. Florus F. Lawrence, of Columbus, Ohio, in Surgery.

Dr. Norbury has chosen for the subject of his

address, "Clinical Psychology," and Dr. Lawrence will discuss in his address, "Surgical Principles and Theories." In addition to these addresses there will be the annual address of the President, Dr. Carstens.

A partial list of the papers promised is published herewith. Communications regarding papers should be addressed to the Secretary, Dr. Henry E. Tuley, 111 W. Kentucky Street, Louisville, Ky.

Elaborate arrangements have been made by the local profession of Hot Springs to entertain the visiting doctors and their wives, the meeting being held at one of the largest hotels, which will be specially opened in advance of the season to accommodate the Association. A cordial invitation is extended to every physician in the Valley to attend this meeting for which a large number of interesting and valuable papers have been promised.

SANTA CLARA COUNTY.

The meeting of the society held July 18, 1906, in the Auditorium of the Y. M. C. A. Building, San Jose, was one of the most successful ever known to our society. The following members were in attendance: Asay, Hervey, Fraser, Wm. Simpson, Harris, Park, Anderson, Trueman, McMahon, Goodrich, Jessie Simpson, Newell, Napp, Keith, A. S. J. Smith, Jayet, Cooper, Brown, Wagner, Beattie, Grissim, Burns, Whiffen, Cothran, Miller, Lyons, and Osborne.

The regular order of business was suspended for the purpose of at once proceeding to the special lecture of the evening which was delivered by Dr. Dudley Tait, of San Francisco: Subject, "Some New Problems in Lung Surgery." The lecture was illustrated and held the closest attention of the members throughout. At its conclusion Dr. Tait was warmly congratulated and the society tendered him a rising vote of thanks as a token of their appreciation of the evening's entertainment. Owing to the absence of Dr. Snow, of special committee on the subject, the discussion of the subject of reduction of fees for examination for Life Insurance Companies was ordered to be the special order of business for next regular monthly meeting. This meeting will be held on Wednesday evening, August 15th, 1906, at the St. James Hotel, San Jose, at the hour of 8 o'clock, sharp. In addition to the special order Dr. George Lee Eaton of San Francisco, will present an illustrated paper on "The Treatment of Pyelitis and Ureteritis by Urethral Catheterization and Lavage, and Microscopic Urinary Diagnosis."

Members of the council are requested to meet in session prior to the meeting for the consideration of important business. Councillors will please report to the President not later than 7:45 p. m.

ANTRIM EDGAR OSBORNE,
Secretary.

Please remember that the office of the State Society, and of the State Journal, and of the Secretary, Dr. Philip Mills Jones, is now located at

2210 Jackson Street,
San Francisco.